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Latin America Weekly Review

9 March 1978

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Approved for
Date JUN 11 1978

~~SECRET~~Human Rights Developments

Some 200 Peruvian workers are being detained in connection with a general strike on 27-28 February. Most of those ~~arrested~~ participated in civil disturbances in the Lima-Callao area, but arrests of leaders of the Communist General Confederation of Workers, which sponsored the strike, also have been reported.

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The strike was called to protest the dismissal, arrest, and deportation of union activists who participated in a ~~more serious~~ walkout last July that paralyzed the capital and precipitated rioting that left six dead. This week's strike, which was intended to force the government to grant a labor amnesty, appears to have been a failure.

The Peruvian Government is split over the best way to handle the labor agitation. President Morales Bermudez is said to favor the amnesty, but hardliners in the military believe that giving in to the leftists' demands could trigger further worker protests over high prices and fuel demands for higher wages.

The government feels it must hold the line, for strict adherence to its tough austerity program is essential if Peru is to qualify for the foreign loans necessary to guarantee the success of its economic stabilization program.

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On 26 February, the day before independence day in the Dominican Republic, President Balaguer made several human rights gestures. Thirty-eight prisoners were pardoned, re-entry prohibitions were lifted against 66, and passports were ordered returned to 55 Dominicans.

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The Paris-based International Union of Lawyers will send a delegation to Argentina from 12 to 18 March. The delegation is concerned with the welfare of lawyers who have either disappeared or are being held under executive detention.

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The Chilean Government last week lifted the banishment order against 12 Christian Democrats, who have ~~turned~~ turned to Santiago from the north in good health and perhaps in a defiant mood. President Pinochet has ^{warned} that he will banish them again if they break the rules of the political recess.

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